

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Midway through the 2005 Legislative Session



*By State Representative John J. Ryan*

We are now more than halfway through this year's "long session" of the General Assembly, which convened in the first week in January, and concludes in early June, hopefully without the need for any Special Sessions this year! Through the first part of the legislative process, proposed bills were filed, "raised" if they were going to proceed, referred to the appropriate Committee, then scheduled for public hearing, then voted upon for drafting by the Committee, and if a bill has made it through all of these steps, voted out by the Committee before the Committee's deadline (the "JF" process).

In recent columns, we have touched on Governor Rell's budget proposal, the likelihood of the legislative majority imposing tax increases, and the import and effect of our State's 'spending cap.' Since the 20 + legislative Committees are each reaching their respective JF deadlines, and voting bills out to the floor of the House or Senate (or "across" to other Committees), this gives us a good opportunity to briefly review some individual legislative topics of 'local interest.'

- House Bill 6584 - 'The cell phone bill': If you are a long-time column reader, you are aware that legislation to limit hand-held cell phone use while driving has been a legislative issue for years, and has not yet been resolved (one year, a bill made it all the way to the House floor and passed, but was not acted on by the Senate; Another year the reverse situation occurred!); I have again co-sponsored this year's version of the bill, which is still alive, having successfully come out of the Transportation Committee. Will this finally be the year that an acceptable bill makes it "all the way" and becomes law?
- Senate Bill 156 - 'The Piedmont Club raffle bill': Our local Darien Piedmont Club, like many organizations, has long conducted an annual raffle as one of their fund-raising efforts, but recent regulation interpretations have limited their ability to get a permit for such a raffle; hence this bill (which I have also co-sponsored and is supported by Attorney General Blumenthal) to ratify the clubs' ability to continue to conduct their raffles; the bill was raised, heard and successfully voted out by the Public Safety Committee (of which I am a member), so we are about halfway through the process of seeing this bill become law;

- HB 6205 - Soundbarriers: A topic that has been of concern for years to those who abut I-95 in as much as the funding for the original soundbarrier construction in the 1980s was exhausted long ago, and DOT has been less than receptive to resolving any remaining problems; this bill is another attempt similar to one Rep. Ken Bernhard of Westport and I tried a few years back. It would be enabling legislation to allow new taxing districts to be formed for a 'do-it-yourself' approach to the problem, and the bill has made it out of the Transportation Committee, so we will have to see what happens;

And some 'quickies,' all of which I have cosponsored, are: House Bill 6505, to provide further bonding funds to South Norwalk's highly successful, and expanding Maritime Aquarium; House Bill 1057, Governor Rell's 'transportation improvement package' with major initiatives for lower Fairfield county (and through its first step of being approved in committee) and House Bill 1087 to create a Task Force to monitor the application for the proposed liquefied gas facility in the middle of Long Island Sound.

Please note that this by no means covers all the issues or activities I am regularly involved with. For example, I also regularly screen for and respond to proposed bills that might negatively effect our highly successful (and virtually unique) Post 53, or bills that are anti-business in nature. And just one of my numerous duties as an Assistant Minority Leader is mentoring. As has been the case every year, a freshman legislator sits next to me on the floor of the House, and I attempt to be as helpful as I can in the learning process of a new legislator!

Once again, we have run out of space long before we ran out of topics, but these are a few of the things happening at Session mid-point. PLEASE note that it is relatively easy to track proposed legislation, committees, votes and the process itself through our General Assembly website: [www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov) (it has to be easy if I can do it), so keep in mind that it is YOUR government; get involved!

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at [John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us](mailto:John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us) or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.